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S E R M O N

DELIVERED IN
CHRIST-CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA,
On the 21st Day of JUNE, 1786,
AT THE OPENING OF THE
C O N V E N T I O N
OF THE
PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH,

IN THE STATES OF
NEW-YORK, MARYLAND,
NEW-JERSEY, VIRGINIA,
PENNSYLVANIA, AND
DELAWARE, SOUTH-CAROLINA.

BY THE RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,
WILLIAM WHITE, D.D. *K*
(THEN RECTOR OF CHRIST-CHURCH AND ST. PETER'S,)
NOW BISHOP OF PENNSYLVANIA.

PHILADELPHIA PRINTED:
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PROTESTANT LITURGICAL CHURCH

NEW JERSEY
PENNSYLVANIA
DELAWARE

IN THE RIGHT REVEREND BISHOP OF PENNSYLVANIA

WILLIAM WHITE

THE RECTOR OF CHRIST CHURCH AND ST. PETER

NOT BISHOP OF PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA: PRINTED BY

LONDON: R. BARNARD

BY JOHN WILKINSON AND SON, NO. 57, FLEET STREET

CHURCH LANE

(PRICE SIX PENCE)

In CONVENTION, June 24, 1786.

On Motion,

RESOLVED, That the Thanks of this Convention be given to the Reverend Dr. WHITE, for his Sermon at the Opening of this Convention; and that he be requested to have the same printed.

Extract from the Minutes,

F. HOPKINSON, Secretary;

ON Sunday the 4th of February, 1787, WILLIAM WHITE, D.D. and SAMUEL PROVOST, D.D. were consecrated, in the Archiepiscopal Chapel, Lambeth, BISHOPS; the former, of Pennsylvania; the latter, of New-York; on which Occasion, the Archbishop of York presented them, and his Grace, together with the Bishops of Bath and Wells and Peterborough, united with the Archbishop of Canterbury in the Imposition of Hands.

In Convention, June 24, 1786.

On Motion,

RESOLVED, That the thanks of this Convention be given to the Reverend Dr. W. White, for his services at the Opening of this Convention; and that he be requested to draw the Minutes.

Extract from the Minutes.

T. Hopkinson, Secretary.

On Tuesday the 4th of February, 1787, WILLIAM WHITE, D.D. and Samuel Provost, D.D. were conferred, in the Chapel Royal, Lambeth, with the Bishop of London, the Bishop of New-York, ex-archbishop, the Archbishop of York present them, and his Grace, together with the Bishops of Bath and Wells and Peterborough, united with the Archbishop of Canterbury in the reception of them.

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S E R M O N, &c.

P S A L M XLV. 14.

THE KING'S DAUGHTER IS ALL GLO-
RIOUS WITHIN: HER CLOTHING
IS OF WROUGHT GOLD.

IT is uncertain, whether the Psalm be-
fore us should be considered as relating
immediately to the Messiah; or the same
divine character were remotely in view, un-
der the type of some known earthly Prince.
The former opinion hath been preferred,
from there being no character or event in
the Jewish church, which seems to shew a
competent ground for certain parts of the
composition. If however we should believe,
that the inspired author referred to some
event and character of the time in which he
lived, the mystical meaning will not be lost.
For such allegorical representations of divine
truth are usual with the Prophets; and, as

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it is often necessary for the understanding of a writer to keep in view his peculiar style and manner, we have here a rule of criticism which establissheth the double sense of prophecy.

THIS method of communicating future events was agreeable, as well to the genius and language of the ancient Hebrews, as to the nature of a revelation that was to be gradually opened to human view. Such a method of interpretation will also be acknowledged reasonable both by Jews and by Christians ; by the former, as being the sense of their Rabbis, who in this way explain many of the prophecies, and particularly that of my text, which they declare to relate to the Messiah ; and by Christians, who find in the New Testament many references to the Old to be accounted for in no other way ; and especially a quotation from the psalm before us, which is applied to the same divine person by St. Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews—" Thy throne, O God, is for ever
 " and ever : A sceptre of righteousness is the
 " sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved
 " righteousness and hated iniquity ; therefore
 " God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with
 " the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

It

It is therefore agreeable to the sense as well of the Jewish church as of the Christian, to consider the forty-fifth psalm with a remote, if not an entire reference to the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah. In the strong imagery of eastern poetry, the glories of Christ our King are displayed under circumstances of royal splendor. His church is described by the allusion of "the King's daughter;" adorned, as well with all the inward virtues, as with all the outward ornaments which grace the station of her father. Perhaps in part of the psalm the character hath a more limited sense, agreeably to the licence of allegorical composition: So that the Jewish church may be peculiarly designed by "the King's daughter;" and then, the churches which were to be gathered from among the Gentiles will be "the virgins who are her fellows." However, in the general course of the psalm, it will be more consistent to consider the whole Christian church as described in the same person, and in the same relation to her divine head.

BUT as my design is only to shew the general sense of the prophecy, and not to explain the minute circumstances of the al-

legory, I proceed to the subject I have chosen for this occasion ; which is to set before my reverend and honoured audience such a view of the Christian church, as will point out to us the duties incumbent on all those, who are called to any share of management in its weighty concerns.

THEREFORE I shall first consider the church as a society of divine origin, in connexion with Christ its head : which is represented by the metaphor of “ the King’s “ daughter ;”

2d. I SHALL shew the consequent duty we are under, as a branch of the universal church, of holding the truth of the Christian doctrine ; and thus answering to the description “ all glorious within ;”

And 3d. I SHALL invite your attention to the offices of devotion which become a church thus divine in its origin, and holy in its doctrine ; and which are the “ clothing “ of wrought gold.”

1st. I AM to consider the church as a society of divine origin, in conjunction with
Christ

Christ its head : which is represented by the metaphor of “ the King’s daughter.”

AND here it may be proper to observe, that however high the claims of this spiritual community, they are not such as interfere with the rights of sovereignty, or with the duties of citizens and subjects. The holy scriptures have founded no temporal dominion on the dispensation of grace; nor erected any ecclesiastical authority that is to dictate to the civil. On the contrary, they beautifully harmonize with all the righteous views of government; and support the sanctions of law, with the more powerful sanctions of religion.

THE divine origin which I have asserted may be proved—from prophecy—from institution—and from protection. It may be proved from prophecy. For it is evident in many of the promises of a Messiah, that, when the time of accomplishing them shall come, a flock was to be gathered within the fold of the promised shepherd; a religious community was to be founded, under the immediate government of the predicted Prince.

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AN instance of this we find so far back as the days of the father of the tribes of Israel. The venerable patriarch, being indulged in the lowest ebb of life with the prospect of the fortunes of his offspring, thus pours forth his prophecy concerning the royal tribe——

“ The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,
 “ nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until
 “ Shiloh come: and unto him shall the ga-
 “ thering of the people be.” Here is a pro-
 mise, not only of a Shiloh, but also of a ga-
 thering of the people under him; which
 shews, that when the temporal government
 should decline, a spiritual community was to
 be established under the promised head: The
 sceptre was to give way to the cross; and
 they were to be alike the emblems of their
 respective kingdoms.

IN like manner the prophet Isaiah, when he beheld with the eye of faith the “ Child “ who should be born”—“ the Son who “ should be given,”—makes it a descriptive circumstance of the promise, that “ of the “ increase of his government there should be “ no end;” and thus there is set forth to us an united participation of benefits under the dominion of the promised ruler.

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MANY passages might be produced to the same purpose: but I proceed to my next proof,—institution, or positive appointment.

OUR Saviour, from the very beginning of his ministry, spoke of the establishment of his religion, as a spiritual kingdom to be begun on earth: A kingdom, not indeed conducted on the maxims of worldly policy, yet necessarily involving dominion on the one part, with obedience and communion on the other.

AT the close of his ministry, various institutions shew, that however spiritual his religion, it is not in such sort spiritual, as to exclude the idea of an outward and visible society. The ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper shew an union among those who come under their obligations. Commissions given by him to his apostles for the governing of his followers, and their appointing under those commissions the different orders of the ministry, first Deacons for the lower duties of the church, then Bishops or Elders for the ministry of the word, in subordination to the episcopal authority vested in themselves, and at last towards the close of the apostolic age an order of Bishops exclusively

so called to succeed them in that authority, and to exercise over their respective churches the episcopacy which the apostles had held in common over the whole church—fully prove, that the founding of a spiritual communion was essentially involved in those eternal counsels of God, which centered in the establishment of christianity.

Our Saviour accordingly declared “ that
 “ he would build his church upon a rock,
 “ and that the gates of hell should not pre-
 “ vail against it.” Here we have not only the establishment asserted, but an assurance of its being impregnable to all opposition. Similar to this is the promise accompanying his command to the apostles after his resurrection, and through them to the whole church which he was founding. “ And lo!
 “ I am with you always, even unto the end of
 “ the world.” Most welcome promise! Most comfortable assurance of Christ’s immediate presence with his church, until time shall have run his course! Yes, blessed Jesus! Thou art always with thy church by thy Divine Spirit! Always present with every part of thy mystical body, wherever scattered over the world! In vain shall the pas-
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sions of men oppose thy power! Thy flock shall be under the care of thee, their shepherd! Thy subjects shall confess the sceptre of thee, their king! And there shall never cease to be a family, who shall call upon and be called by thy name!

AND this brings me to the third proof—*Protection*; which hath always accompanied the church, enabling her to exist under a variety of outward fortunes. How wonderful was the progress of christianity from the most humble beginnings! How great its glory in bearing down the enormous fabrick of heathen error! How glorious its triumph over all the arts and malice of its enemies! In vain will one class of infidels extenuate by dishonest representations the persecutions endured by the early christians; and as vainly will others of them account for her increase by the severity of those very persecutions. The malice and the ridicule of the great, the indifference and the labours of philosophers, have in their turn contributed to that establishment which was pre-determined by God; in whose hands they have been the unconscious instruments of his will. In the mean time, states and empires have

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had their rise, their glory and their decay. But the church hath survived the mighty ruins, and will continue to survive all the changes and chances of time, until the consummation of all things : and even then she will only change her state from warfare to glory.

MUCH, no doubt, hath this heaven-established community felt of the revolutions in human affairs. For so long as we shall “ hold our treasure in earthen vessels,” and the great concerns of the gospel shall be handled by frail and sinful men, the church cannot but suffer from the influence of their infirmities and corruptions ; and even be affected by the progress or decay of letters and civilization. Still however the features of her divine form have been seen through the darkness of superstition, and have shewn the resemblance of that Redeemer in whose image she was created.

HER relation to him her divine head is set forth in scripture under many expressive metaphors. Sometimes the church is compared to the human body, of which the head is Christ ; “ from whom the whole body,
“ fitly

“ fitly joined together, and compacted by
 “ that which every joint supplieth, accord-
 “ ing to the effectual working in every part,
 “ maketh increase of the body, unto the
 “ edifying of itself in love.” Sometimes the
 same relation is taught under the image of a
 building, of which “ Jesus Christ is the
 “ chief corner-stone,” and his followers are
 “ as lively stones, built up a spiritual house,
 “ an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual
 “ sacrifices to God, by Jesus Christ.” And
 the same sentiment is contained in allusions
 to the relation between husband and wife :
 For so in the book of Revelation, the church,
 when passing from her militant to her trium-
 phant state, is compared to “ a bride adorned
 “ for her husband.”

Now the ground of these metaphors is
 the authority which Christ hath derived from
 the Father, for the governing and the pro-
 tecting of the church : An authority imply-
 ing, as existing in our head, all the attri-
 butes essential to divine government.

THE whole analogy of faith requireth,
 that we consider all the benefits which can
 ultimately be derived from God the Father

as given through the intermediate agency of his Son ; and on the other hand, all the homage and obedience we can render to the Father as to be presented through the merits of his Son. Therefore he is described as “ knowing the hearts of all men ;” “ mercy, grace, and peace,” are imprecated from his immediate presence ; he is seated “ far above all principality and power, and “ might, and dominion, and every name “ that is named, not only in this world, but “ also in that which is to come.” It is said, that, “ to him every knee shall bow, of “ things in heaven, and things on the earth, “ and things under the earth ;” and lastly, he is vested with the awful character of judge “ of quick and dead,” the Father having “ committed all judgment to the Son,” in order “ that all men might honour the Son, “ even as they honour the Father.”

WHEN we take a review of this part of our subject, in what an important point of view doth it represent whatever relateth to the government of the church ! Every local church is a branch of a widely extended body, which we have seen to be of divine establishment, under the government of him,

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“ in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the “ Godhead.” Laws must be made by this, as by every other community, for its self-government ; but they should be such as will secure the inestimable treasure of the gospel. The trust of making them is committed to frail and imperfect men, who may abuse it through the influence of corrupt passion ; but woe be to him, by whom the Son of Man is thus betrayed ! With what disinterested hearts should we enter such an holy pale ! With what pure hands should we administer in such high transactions ! How remote should be the views of worldly policy ; and how quick our jealousy of ourselves, lest the cause of God should suffer through our frailties !

ALL this will further appear under the second head of my discourse, which is to shew the consequent duty we are under, as a branch of the universal church, of holding the truth of the christian doctrine, and thus answering to the description “ all glorious “ within.”

FOR, as in the metaphor, no external decorations could have been a substitute for solid worth ; so, no ecclesiastical institutions
have

have any real reference to christianity, otherwise than in connection with its characteristic doctrine.

By the christian doctrine, I mean that which hath been held by the whole church, notwithstanding all the superstition and enthusiasm which have in different times and places in part obscured its lustre.

Yes ; however various the opinions of professing christians, there are in the holy scriptures the outlines of a system which nothing could obliterate : Conspicuous truths, which have been always seen and confessed by the great body of professing christians.

THAT there is one infinitely perfect God the Father ; and one Lord Jesus Christ, God begotten of God, and thus possessed of all divine attributes, who having been “ in the beginning and before all worlds,” took in time man’s nature upon him, to make in it an oblation for sin ; and one Holy Spirit, who, being sent by the Father and the Son assists mankind by his inspirations ; that these three divine agents are essentially united, as well in themselves, as in accomplishing the work of

of redemption ; that the end of the gospel dispensation is to rescue man from the darkness and corruption of fallen nature, making him through faith acceptable to God, and enabling him to live in good works ; and that the result of all is the bringing of those who shall believe in Christ with a faith evidencing itself in holiness to the everlasting happiness of heaven, which can be claimed only through his merits ; are truths which have been never lost sight of by the visible church : They were indited by that blessed Spirit, who was to “ lead her into all truth,” and the upholding of them is essential to the accomplishment of the promise, “ that the “ same divine Comforter should continue “ with her for ever.”

THERE is therefore a doctrine which hath been at all times acknowledged ; and it is “ the inward glory of the King’s daughter,” the intrinsic worth of our holy religion.

AND here we have the true ground of church unity : Of the only unity sought for in the early ages ; when the different churches of Christendom, knowing no other common head than Christ, lived in an happy agree-
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ment in the same faith under their respective Bishops, and in a delightful communion founded on that agreement.

How important then is the preservation of a faith thus maintained by the Catholic Christian world ! And how great should be our caution, lest, by loosening ourselves from the common tie of the communion of saints, we cease to be a member of that body of which Christ vouchsafeth to call himself the head : A part of that church, in which he hath promised to be present “ even unto the “ end of the world !”

AND the argument deriveth weight from all the circumstances under which the church was planted.

WERE it even a society founded on the common maxims of worldly policy ; yet, if its constitution had been atchieved by distinguished characters, if it had been sealed by the blood of heroes, if it had produced splendid examples of sublime virtue, if it had stood the admiration of ages, and if it had been found favourable to the general happiness ; there would be sufficient reason for our va-
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luing and preserving the precious treasure derived to us through so glorious a channel.

How much more then should we hold sacred that holy doctrine of Christ, which we profess as a part of a community founded by the high arm of Omnipotence! Which was cemented by the blood of saints and martyrs, and even by the precious blood of the Redeemer! Which hath made the church the nursery of the brightest ornaments of their respective ages! Which hath prepared so many pious souls for the unutterable glories of heaven! And lastly, which hath been acknowledged by the wise and good, through a long succession of time, as the best security of the general welfare.

AND this last circumstance bringeth into view all the happy effects of the influence of christianity over the minds and manners of men.

FOR if we are to "know the tree by its fruits," how excellent is a religion which hath disseminated the most exalted ideas of the attributes and moral government of God, and hath enlarged the minds even of the illi-

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terate with sentiments which excel the most splendid boasts of heathen philosophy!

AGAIN; how excellent is a religion, which hath brought such additions to the stock of social happiness! hath softened the severity of human policy! hath moderated the rage of destructive war! hath guarded the rights of the weaker sex! hath mitigated the hardships of the more humble conditions! and hath in every respect been a friend to the helpless and afflicted, and a restraint to the heavy hand of oppression! and all this, not more by its positive precepts, than by a mild spirit pervading the whole system, and acquiring an insensible influence, even over those who profess the least of subjection to its authority!

How excellent is our religion in this respect also, that it giveth peace of mind, and fixeth the integrity and the hopes of its professors on an immoveable foundation! That superstition should bind weak men in willing slavery; and that enthusiasm should transport men of strong imaginations into visionary speculations and extravagant actions; may be expected from the infirmities of our nature.

ture. But, that the wisest, the most temperate, and the best informed, should build on this rock their highest expectations, and that they should find its promises the best sweeteners of life and the best prospect of eternity, can only be accounted for from those glorious truths of our religion, which will carry the church through all her discouragements and difficulties !

How sacred then should be that deposit of holy doctrine which she hath entrusted to our hands ! And how great our care, lest, while infidels would openly destroy this best security for the general happiness, we may be joining in the destructive project ; by giving up those high and leading truths, which, as they are distinguishing parts of the system, may also be necessarily connected with the benefits resulting from it.

LET it then be our principal care, to hold the truth of the christian doctrine. Now one provision for this, is the prescribing of such forms of divine worship as shall be an inclosure of the sacred fountain against the arts of insidious men ; who may otherwise “ creep in unawares,” to pollute it.

THEREFORE I proposed, as the third head of my discourse, to lead your attention to the offices of devotion which become a church thus divine in its origin, and holy in its doctrine; and which are the "clothing of wrought gold."

AND here, let none confound the metaphor with the spiritual meaning; or think there is held up a plea in favour of a showy and fantastic worship. For, as we may perceive a clear difference between the gaudy splendor of affected ornament, and the decent dignity suitable to birth and station; so, it is not in unmeaning ceremonies that we must look for the majesty, beauty and propriety, which should adorn all reasonable offices of devotion. Not however that religion is so abstracted as to have no connection with the senses. Whatever charms the eye, and ear, acquireth by means of them an influence over the mind: and God forbid, that those avenues should be shut against such subjects only, as are the most worthy to take entire possession of the soul.

STILL, the most brilliant ornaments of divine worship are prayers and praises, suitable to gospel truth.

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THE Apostle St. Peter, speaking of the imperfect manifestation given by prophecy of the truths of christianity, saith, “ that “ the very Angels had desired to look into “ them.” And it must be acknowledged by all, that religion furnisheth the most sublime and magnificent ideas which can occupy the human mind. If then our religious institutions should fall below the greatness of the subject, christianity itself will not appear in its full dignity; and our devotions will proportionably languish.

AGAIN the Psalmist, when impressed with a sense of the loveliness of devotion, poureth forth this rapturous admiration of the place of prayer; “ Oh! how amiable are thy “ dwellings, thou Lord of hosts!” And it would be an easy matter to pursue this sentiment, so as to trace the influence of devotion over our affections, in its exciting love, joy, gratitude, sympathy, and, in short, every good affection characteristic of man.

WE also find the Psalmist giving the following invitation to prayer and praise; “ O “ worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!” implying, that in the exercises of religion,

religion, we should consult, not purity only, but also ornament. And indeed it would be unsuitable to the subject to suppose, that while all nature is displaying the glories of God, not only in the important uses, but likewise in the delightful beauties of her works, the praises of man alone should be incapable of being adorned: That the devotions of the church should admit of no grace in the choice and arrangement of materials.

FURTHER, the Apostle St. Paul, when giving lessons of good order for the government of the church, delivereth this among others, applying it in a variety of particulars; "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also." And if we were to extend this principle through all the offices of devotion, we should find it to forbid whatever is shocking to sober sense, or would wound the chaste ear of liberal criticism.

Now it followeth, that the uniting of all these in the service of the church should be a principal object of her pious care: And that she should disdain no assistance which can be taken from the experience and judgment

ment of past ages, or from the progress of literature, or even from the cultivation of the finer arts.

IN the accomplishing of this great work, every church is left to the liberty wherewith “Christ hath made it free:” A liberty, which ought nevertheless to be used under the recollection, that “God is not the author of confusion.”

THERE are indeed scattered through the scriptures general sentiments on the subject of prayer, which ought to govern in all appointments for devotion; and in particular we have on record one prayer, which was designed to be not only in itself a form, but a pattern of all others: a prayer, which, had it been uniformly kept in view, would have prevented all the familiarities of enthusiasm, all the unmeaning practices of superstition, and all incumbrances of every sort, which are shocking to an enlightened understanding.

WE cannot doubt, but that in the age of the Apostles, the spirit of this divine form was conspicuous in all the devotions which they governed. When these, the first and

most distinguished lights of the church, were withdrawn from her, we find no evidence of any form having been enjoined by them for universal observance. We therefore conclude, that there was no such form; but that the devotions of the different churches were governed by rules and forms prescribed by their respective bishops, with the approbation of their several flocks: for thus much I think appears from the little information which history hath given us on this subject. After the heads of those independent communities began to confederate for the better maintaining of the common faith, they seem to have taken from one another what was best in their respective liturgies: and hence there arose collections of prayers for general use; the effusions of the devout fervor of holy bishops, who had flourished the most conspicuously as saints or martyrs.

At last it happened, that these divine compositions became loaded with superstitious vanities; “the wrought gold” adulterated with the foreign ornaments of Pagan worship: which was the natural consequence of the decline of literature, the mixture of Gothic with Christian manners, and the rise
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of an enormous spiritual power on temporal wealth and grandeur.

WHEN letters revived, they had of course their influence on christian worship. And while in different countries the reformation was conducted agreeably to the sentiments which respectively prevailed in them, it was a favourite object with those who reformed the worship of the church of England, to distinguish between the seraphic devotions of the purer times and the corruptions mixed with them: and to present the former to the church with others of their own inditing; the effusions of a piety, which conducted some of them through a glorious martyrdom.

THESE admirable forms have been handed down to us. They are "the clothing of wrought gold," which no time will tarnish. We trust that they will be the glory of our church to the latest ages; and that by means of them, with the improvements she may think proper to adopt, she will secure the divine ordinances against suffering from the imperfections of those by whose hands they may be administered.

I SAID, *with the improvements she may think proper to adopt.* For there is a near connection between a religious attachment to our venerable liturgy, and the having our eyes open to the light thrown on it by the brightest luminaries of our church. And I am under no apprehension of being thought to abuse the place and the occasion, when I refer to it as a known fact, that the members generally of the communion here represented wish for a final review of our ecclesiastical offices; although they also wish it to be conducted with the caution and moderation becoming a church “not given to change.”

In the mean time, as proposals have been and will still be made, all intended for the mature consideration of this weighty matter, and for the accomplishing of it at last with unanimity and wisdom; give me leave, my reverend and honoured audience, to state to you some leading objects which appear to me worthy to be kept in view: and they relate to our service, not merely as we wish it to be distinguished with grace and propriety, but principally as the subject involveth those essential truths of christianity, of which all our offices should be the security and the ornament.

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For this purpose, let us in the first place keep in view what the apostle St. Paul hath taught us, where he saith, " Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Here we see the support of the whole christian fabric ; every part of which should shew its relation to its basis : that is ; all ecclesiastical institutions should illustrate the improvements made by christianity, in whatever relateth to our everlasting happiness. In the same passage we are told, " If any man build on this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble ; every man's work shall be made manifest. For the fire shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work shall abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss ; but he himself shall be saved, yet so, as by fire." Here is indeed an awful caution against encumbering the truths of christianity with the subtle distinctions of a vain philosophy, or with any thing else that may narrow its blessed influence. For the passage sheweth that all such zeal, however sincere, will be

unprofitable to the person swayed by it ; and that his work, however splendid in his own eye, will be lost ; he himself being saved with difficulty, or as by fire ; not having his christian labours crowned with the same glory as others, who building on the same foundation, have raised an useful and ornamental work. Still, however, the foundation is that which must principally be secured. Allowance is made for those who shall erect on it the flimsy building of hay and stubble ; but none for those, who with sacrilegious hands shall endeavour to tear up the foundation.

As our next guide, let us keep in view what the apostle hath reminded us of, where, varying the foregoing metaphor, he saith, “ Ye are built upon the foundation of the “ Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.” Which should make us conduct ourselves on the maxims of the apostolic age ; taking the holy scriptures for our principal instruction in this matter, and next to them, the writings of those who were nearest to the times of the Apostles. There is an unhappy propensity in mankind to run from any extreme into its opposite.

opposite. Hence the infallibility claimed by a later human authority hath in part prevented the reverence in reason due to the earlier : and I cannot but think, that if ever the church in general should return to the happy medium, we shall be furnished with such faithful expositors, as will effectually overthrow, as well the gross errors of the middle ages, as the many fanciful systems which are the abuses of the free speculation of modern times.

ANOTHER help which I shall point to, not however as of equal authority with the others, but as a faithful comment on them, is the keeping in view the doctrines of the gospel as held by the church of England ; a church which indeed makes no claim of jurisdiction here, but will we hope for ever retain our gratitude for past benefits, and among them for this, the greatest of all, our having received the sacred legacy of divine truth uncorrupted through her hands. If indeed it should appear, after mature examination, that her doctrines as they appear throughout her service and her other institutions may in any instances be more happily expressed, either by the change of words of
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uncertain meaning, or by dropping the almost forgotten distinctions of the schools, or by the omission of what was especially adapted to the time of the reformation, God forbid, that we should contend for an inviolable adherence to any thing confessedly resting on man's authority. But the hope, or rather the confident assurance which I mean to express, is, that the venerable parent tree will not be disgraced by its branches; that a church, which hath stood for ages renowned for her orthodoxy, will not have cause to grieve over any essential deviation, in a new church which hath arisen under her nursing care.

Lastly: As it is agreed, that for the conducting of our concerns "with decency and in order" there must be the highest office of our ministry, let all our endeavours to obtain it be distinguished with moderation and firmness. Hitherto we have alike maintained the attachment due to what we conceive to be of apostolic usage, and a regard to the duties which become us as citizens of one confederate republic. If the fatherly condescension with which we have been received is tempered with caution, it is such as becometh

cometh the watchful guardians of the truth of christianity : and we ought not to complain of a delay, arising from an holy jealousy, which will be thankfully acknowledged by the whole christian world. And, if in guarding against expected difficulties, we have been inattentive to others which a conscious integrity in the christian doctrine prevented our foreseeing, and these grounded on such private representations as it would have been uncharitable to have supposed ; we cannot but hope, that the whole will be at last settled to the more intire satisfaction of all concerned, and with the more sure pledge of our being for ever united by the bond of the Catholic Faith.

IN the mean time, my reverend and honoured audience, let us put up our humble and earnest prayers to the throne of grace, that all our measures may be conducted with the happy union of hearts in which they have been begun. For we are taught by the sacred oracles this important lesson, and the general history of Christendom is a melancholy illustration of the truth of it, that for the edification of the church, the mild grace of charity will do more than “ the under-
I
“ standing

“ standing of all mysteries and all know-
 “ ledge.”

COME therefore, Divine Spirit, the author
 of all grace ! pour into our hearts that most
 excellent grace of all, which “ believeth,
 “ hopeth, and endureth all things !” May
 this thy blessed unction flow down upon us
 from the High Priest of our profession, and
 may it spread its delicious odour over every
 part of his mystical garment ! Thus shall it
 be “ like the precious ointment upon the
 “ head, that ran down unto the beard, even
 “ unto Aaron’s beard, and went down to
 “ the skirts of his clothing !”

Now therefore to the Father, and to the
 Son, and to the same Divine Spirit, be
 ascribed all glory in the church for evermore,
Amen.



F I N I S

